


State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Region 10

John Day Vapor Response
John Day, Oregon
June 9, 2015

An EPA Emergency Response Team and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality have been helping the City of John Day investigate unusual odors in and around homes and commercial buildings along South Canyon Boulevard and SW Brent Street between SW 2nd Avenue and SW 6th Avenue.

What have we found so far?

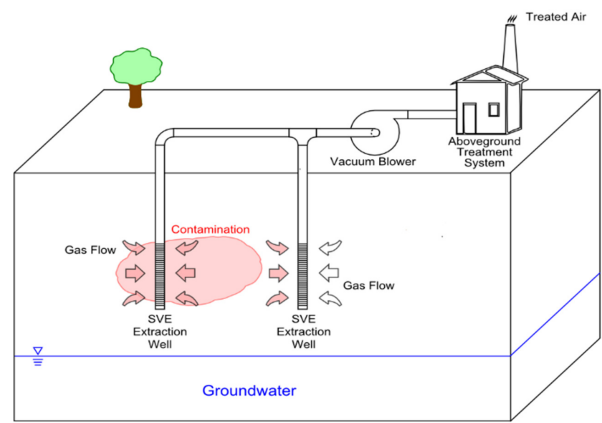
We have sampled air, soil and groundwater from homes, businesses and monitoring wells in the affected neighborhood. Air monitoring will continue for highly affected residences. See the table at right for more details about the data collection work.

What happens next?

EPA has nearly completed our work to address the immediate health concerns and find the source of the vapors. We are preparing to turn the remaining work over to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. The ODEQ project manager and technical staff have arrived in John Day and we are working together on transition activities.

What's being done to fix the problem?

ODEQ and their contractors will soon install extraction wells to remove any remaining vapors from homes and the surrounding area (see image on back). These extraction wells pull contaminated vapors from the ground and run them through a complex filtration system to remove the Volatile Organic Compounds. The installation and operation of these wells may be noisy. We anticipate that the wells will be operating for 2-4 weeks and hope the noise from the operation will not be too much of an inconvenience during this time.



(more text possibly about how this process works)

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Commented [SJ1]: It would be nice to have the table in closer proximity to this statement. I can help you with layout tomorrow afternoon if needed. I will be out on a project in the morning.

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Commented [SJ2]: Someone sent me an AP style update a few days ago that says it's no longer necessary to put the acronym in parens, just start using it.

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ODEQ will conduct ongoing monitoring to ensure that the source repairs and the extraction wells resolve the odor problem. EPA installed temporary upgrades to the basement or crawlspace ventilation at a few houses. Large fans create positive pressure in the areas with high levels of vapors. The positive pressure keeps vapors from getting back into those spaces. ODEQ will maintain those temporary upgrades, or they will install more permanent measures if that becomes necessary.

What can I do that will help?

- Read and follow the Oregon Health Authority's message "Preventing Health Problems from Volatile Chemical Exposure" attached to this fact sheet. (continue to attach this?)
- Ventilation is still the most important measure that can be taken to get rid of vapors. Leave windows open for air flow. Create a cross draft by opening two windows and placing a fan in one of them. Try to bring in fresh air from outside.
- Fill in cracks or holes in cement basement floors and walls with products such as foam sealer.
- Put down a vapor barrier in crawl spaces where vapors might come up from the ground. Black plastic is one easily available option.
- Limit your time in any room where you smell an unusual odor.

Commented [SJ5]: I try to use active tense instead of passive tense

Commented [gs6]: This is the first mention of source repairs. We mention extraction wells but what is meant by "source repairs"? Do we mean remediation at the likely source, such as soil excavation and removal? Repairs to leaks and pipes? Maybe this is purposely vague so as not to reveal too much about the likely source, in which case it's fine.

Commented [gs7]: I would probably continue to attach this. It's good information. However, one comment on the fact sheet: do we want the poison control phone number at the bottom instead of an OHA number? Seems at the last conference call there was talk of OHA providing a number for general vapor/odor questions. If so, maybe this is better than the poison control option.

